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TAGS: SENV  
SUBJECT: ENVSEC seeks donor assistance

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¶11. SUMMARY: ENVSEC, the Environment & Security initiative of several UN agencies, OSCE, NATO's Science for Peace and Security Program and Regional Environment Center (REC) met December 4 with donor countries to review progress in ongoing projects and discuss how best in the future to address environment and human security, including in armed conflicts. ENVSEC is actively looking to expand its donor base and has identified a number of different ways countries could support its initiatives. Even with an investment of only modest resources, ENVSEC could serve as a useful platform from which the U.S. could help mitigate specific environmental problems, promote trans-border cooperation and address risks of environmental security in the region. END SUMMARY.

¶12. At a meeting in Vienna on December 4, ENVSEC officials reviewed projects currently underway in countries in Central Asia, South Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus, and Eastern Europe. (Note: for more background on ENVSEC's goals and activities, please see 09 GENEVA 895. End note.) In terms of improving oversight, ENVSEC hopes in 2010 to establish national advisory groups, both to identify national priorities and to target capacity building assistance. ENVSEC also plans to use established Aarhus Centers in the region to strengthen civil society engagement on environmental issues, relay news of events and strengthen the public outreach aspect of its activities. In terms of projects, ENVSEC plans to focus on a range of transboundary issues, including climate change. One consideration ENVSEC's management board has not finalized is the question of enlargement, which can mean projects in new regions as well as new international partners. By way of background, ENVSEC is an initiative looking at environmental links to human security. ENVSEC partners currently include the UN Development Program, UNDP; the UN Environment Program, UNEP; the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe, OSCE; the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO; the UN Economic Commission for Europe, UNECE; and the Regional Environmental Center, REC.

¶13. ENVSEC of course would welcome additional donor assistance. This includes making contributions directly to the now operational ENVSEC Trust Fund (managed by UNOPS), supporting individual projects directly via the various ENVSEC organizations (UNDP, UNEP, OSCE, UNECE, NATO, REC), providing in-kind technical expertise, providing political support in a country with the host government to facilitate ENVSEC's work there. Finland - as the current largest donor (6 million euros, or about 9 million USD) - has agreed to chair a new-style "ENVSEC Donors Forum". Other current donors to the ENVSEC Trust Fund include Austria (soon to finalize a 500,000 euro contribution, about 725,000 USD) and Switzerland (100,000 Swiss Francs, about USD 100,000). Canada - previously ENVSEC's largest donor but whose contribution is now concluding - reaffirmed its interest to stay involved with ENVSEC. Italy noted that it funds a number of ENVSEC projects indirectly through specific organizations (pointing to the REC's work in the Balkans) and Sweden said there are "active discussions" going on in Stockholm on how to increase its support - possibly through the

¶4. During the December 4 meeting, the German representative lamented that Germany has only been involved in one project to date, primarily because of the lack of visibility of projects in the German MFA and the projects' cross-cutting nature. The UNDP representative noted that now that ENVSEC funding has been stabilized with Finland's contribution, ENVSEC will become increasingly programmatic, so contributions of in-kind technical expertise should become increasingly important.

¶5. After the meeting, Regional EST Off talked with OSCE's David Swalley (who has been OSCE's point person for ENVSEC for several years and a strong OSCE advocate for U.S. engagement in ENVSEC) and noted that with regard to the idea of U.S. in-kind technical expertise, it would be helpful to know more specifically on which projects involvement of U.S. technical experts would be helpful. Swalley agreed but said it would also be helpful to know what kinds of projects or areas the U.S. would be interested in supporting.

¶6. COMMENT: The "chicken and egg" paradox would best be resolved if interested Embassies could review existing ENVSEC projects where U.S. involvement could be useful, or even propose new projects for

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possible funding for which we could make a case with relevant Washington agencies. Further details on specific ENVSEC projects (both ongoing and envisioned) can be found at [www.envsec.org](http://www.envsec.org).

¶7. Both Central and Eastern European Regional EST officer and Geneva ESA officer attended the meeting, underscoring the importance of exchanging information among the USG actors who represent the regions and the international organizations involved in ENVSEC. ENVSEC projects are often transboundary in nature and represent a new modus operandi within the UN that encourages inter-organizational initiatives that better address complex challenges that require a cross-cutting response.

GRIFFITHS